

LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL IAMSLIC GROUP THE BEGINNING AND ITS RESULTS

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ABSTRACT: As one of the main items of the constitution of the Latin American Regional IAMSLIC Group "The regional group must try to attend and show its achievements, projects in any field during the International IAMSLIC Conference," so, here, we are!

We have established short- and medium-term goals. The short-term goals are:

1. To have a working committee.
2. To create a directory of Latin American Group members.
3. To have an e-mail list for the group in order to establish better communication with all members.
4. To look for funds. At this point, we have submitted projects to EPCOR and IAMSLIC in order to provide the necessary equipment and software for the Latin American Group, so we can establish electronic document delivery.
5. We have been sending surveys requesting information related to infrastructure and holdings of the members of the Latin American Group. With this information, we will evaluate the group in order to know the strengths and weaknesses and to establish a strategy on how to promote the electronic document delivery.

With this information, we intend to start with a list of the publications of our institutions.

Other objectives are to have a Latin American Regional Group web page and to provide information about the group in both English and Spanish. <http://ola.icmyl.unam.mx/larg>

We are looking for ways to cooperate with ODINCARSA/IOC/UNESCO and other regional initiatives in our short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

We will update the results and projects of the group.

INTRODUCTION:

The Executive Board of IAMSILIC approved the formation of the new regional Latin American Group in August 2003.

The regional group has as its main objective strengthening the cooperation among libraries in Latin America. To accomplish this, we will seek the experience and strategies of IAMSILIC along with other mechanisms to develop our objectives.

MEMBERS:

Institutions and people from Latin America form the group along with members of IAMSILIC who are interested in joining a Latin American group. Members will represent governmental, private, and public academic institutions related to the aquatic and marine environment as well as other related disciplines.

We began the Latin American regional group with 22 members from ten Latin America countries. We currently have 32 members from 11 countries:

1. Argentina	3
2. Barbados	1
3. Brazil	3
4. Chile	3
5. Colombia	2
6. Cuba	2
7. Ecuador	3
8. México	11
9. Panamá	1
10. Perú	1
11. Venezuela	2

WORKING COMMITTEE:

The Latin American Regional Group Working Committee consists of a President, Treasurer, three secretaries and three delegates at large ("vocals"). This working committee is seeking support for the software and equipment necessary to establish a bibliographic document electronic delivery network for the Latin American Group. With this support, Latin American institutions will be able to share their holdings with all IAMSILIC members, ODINCARSA/IOC/UNESCO and EPCOR/IAL.

Its main objectives are:

1. To share Latin American collections (articles, technical documents, gray literature, etc.) published by the different institutions of the Regional Latin American Group.
2. To promote Latin American bibliography.

This year's main activity has been to help in the logistics of document delivery, providing assistance in technical aspects as well as in procuring grants to provide hardware and software for electronic transfer to some key institutions.

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E-MAIL LIST AND WEB SITE:

In order to have better communication with all the members of this Latin American Group, we have created two e-mail lists:

1. For the Latin American Group: Biblio_Latin@ola.icmyl.unam.mx
2. For some institutions who will join IAMSILIC, in a near future:
Biblio_inst@ola.icmyl.unam.mx

The first list is only for the 32 Latin American Group members. The second one is primarily to encourage institutions to join IAMSILIC. This list has 196 e-mail accounts of institutions of Latin America countries.

The Mazatlán Academic Unit of the Institute of Marine Science and Limnology, U.N.A.M., hosts the Latin American Regional Group of IAMSILIC web site. The web site address is: <http://ola.icmyl.unam.mx/larg>

LOGO:

With the cooperation of German Ramirez we have a logo as Regional Latin American Group-IAMSLIC:



Ramirez is collaborating as a volunteer for the Latin American Regional Group and ODINCARSA/IOC, UNESCO.

GRANTS:

Were submitted three proposals for the electronic delivery document service project to the following associations:

1. ODINCARSA/IOC/UNESCO, for US\$2,400. This was approved in two parts in December 2003 and March 2004.
2. IAMSLIC approved a grant of US\$700.00 in March 2004.
3. EPCOR/IAI. A grant of US\$5,000.00 was approved in October 2004.

We obtained a total support of US\$8,100.00. This money will be used to buy ARIEL full licenses and scanners for some countries.

The working committee is now evaluating the software and hardware resources of each institution. Through this evaluation we will select recipients of new hardware and software from among the institutions who sent the surveys and their holdings, as well as others that were visited and evaluated by committee members.

We think it is a priority to provide as a first step, high quality scanners to selected libraries so they can exchange information through PDFs and e-mail with ARIEL/PROSPERO.

Consistent with our priorities, we bought an ARIEL license and we will buy some scanners. As soon as we receive the EPCOR/IAI funds, we will buy some ARIEL licenses and more scanners, if possible.

Our short-term goal is to establish the electronic document delivery in one institution per country and have this institution serve as a node for its country. The institutions selected will sign letters of agreement to promote resource sharing.

The specific models of scanners required by ARIEL have been very difficult to obtain and the costs vary. Now, we will designate only one country to receive ARIEL, and as soon as we can get the EPCOR/IAI funds we will buy some licenses for them. The institutions that will receive scanners will work with PROSPERO and ARIEL.

COLLABORATION:

The regional group will work to create links with other regional associations in development such as ODINCARSA, the Latin American Fishermen Group, and other regional initiatives to obtain mutual benefits.

ODINCARSA, IOC, UNESCO (Ocean Data and Information Network in Caribbean and South America, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO):

<http://ioc.unesco.org/odincarsa>

ODINCARSA created a database from Latin American marine sciences institutions, as a catalog with minimal information about them. With this information they prepared an assessment of the feasibility of creating a CARSA libraries network. They intend to establish an approach to the problem using limited resources and existing abilities.

They conducted a survey via the Internet with contacts in various libraries in South America and the Caribbean to determine the current status of their catalogues (if they are digitized, available online, software used, etc.), in order to generate a database with information about them. The information was used to adjust this proposal. Unfortunately it was not possible to get responses from all the surveyed addresses; only 26 of the 150 libraries contacted answered the questionnaire. Nonetheless, it is important to continue encouraging librarians to be part of the project. Maybe one of the reasons for few responses is the lack of knowledge about the scope of the project. The first step, a pilot group of libraries that can be interconnected through a portal or web site, could be the best way to promote the initiative and to encourage more libraries to join quickly.

The main problem with making our holdings available through electronic devices is the diversity of software and applications used to manage information. It is necessary to work on strategies to search for information within each system, which is composed of different platforms (operating systems, programming languages, etc.). The conclusion of the study was a proposal which minimally affects established developments in each library, and on the other hand facilitates the implementation of new developments to integrate distributed information for all our libraries. It is considered as important to see standard web sites, which can be implemented in any operating system, with free or commercial solutions such as XML.

As a first step, a centralized database can be installed and developed as the central node of the regional network of electronic catalogues using the ODINCARSA web server. This can be based on XML since it can be accessed through distinct nodes, which integrate the network. This development can be done in different languages: Java, V Basic, Perl, PHP, Visual Fox Pro, etc. At this point there is not a specific recommendation, because it will depend on the skills of the people who are hired for this purpose, the existing facilities, and the amount of information to be incorporated.

It will be necessary to generate documentation and a sample list of names, as well as syntaxes of the databases consulted. Afterwards, a distributed database with interfaces will be established, which will allow connections to distinct databases by means of XML metalanguage. This will enable the document delivery and capacity building required by librarians or computer managers in each node to transform the information in the XML document tables.

Finally the study has a note of optimism as we think that this initiative will come true in the development, expansion, and shared creativity among the Latin American and Caribbean libraries.

EPCOR/IAI (Eastern Pacific Consortium for Research on Global Change):
<http://www.cicese.mx/~iaiepcor> (Under construction)

The Regional Latin American Group is participating in the Information and Data Exchange Project. Amelia Chavez from the CICESE Library in Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico and Catalina Lopez from the Autonomous University of Baja California in Ensenada, Baja California, México, direct the project. It is linked to IAMSLIC's goal of creating a regional alliance of Latin American Libraries in Marine Science to share journal articles, technical documents, book chapters, and other pertinent literature, among the libraries of IAMSLIC, ODINCARSA, EPCOR and the libraries serving IAMSLIC and other regional initiatives.

The project is to organize the use of ARIEL, using the software link to the international library community for transferring bibliographic information in electronic form for interlibrary loan.

EPCOR funds from the 2004 budget have been provided in order to establish a pilot project in Ecuador and Peru to identify the key marine science and fisheries centers that will serve as the receptor nodes for requests and transmission of documents for their countries. The project includes the purchase of software and necessary hardware, plus technical training for library staff. One of the most important tasks is the initial effort to identify the appropriate institution with adequate computer facilities, Internet access, bibliographic collections, qualified personnel and adequate institutional support. The pilot project initiated with 2004 funds will be continued in 2005 with the ultimate goal

that all Latin American countries bordering the eastern Pacific will have access to this service from a central node in their own or a neighboring country.

Amelia and Catalina were in Ecuador and Peru on July 2004, visiting the following institutions in each country (see table below) for the purpose of evaluating and diagnosing the optimal course to establish the in-country nodes receptor nodes.

Results:

The first stage of this process has been to identify the key oceanographic information centers in Ecuador and Peru with the purpose of supplying them with the necessary software and equipment (scanners) and technical training, so they can act as receptor nodes for the requests and transmission of documents for their country.

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Prior to their visits, they defined several parameters in order to undertake an orderly and complete evaluation for each library. The parameters used were quality and quantity of bibliographic collections in marine science, and the level of organization and service made available to users, including the availability of computer equipment, qualified library personnel and available trained technical support.

Their visits included examination of facilities and collections and interviews with directors of the libraries in the institutions in the table above. These visits indicated that none of the institutions meets all the rather strict criteria that would allow the library to function as a central node by itself. In general, the universities have equipment, personnel and technical support while the government agencies/institutes have better collections of marine sciences literature.

In Ecuador, they found that the ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITECNICA DEL LITORAL (ESPOL) has the necessary support in equipment as well as the technical and library personnel and could act as a node in the promotion, reception, and distribution of the marine science collections. However, INOCAR has the largest marine science bibliographic collection that we could find in Ecuador.

In Peru, they found that the UNIVERSIDAD AGRARIA LA MOLINA has also the personnel, equipment and technical support best adapted to provide this service while IMARPE has the largest marine science collection available and DHN has important collections particularly from their cartographic service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the results of their evaluation, they recommend that in both Peru and Ecuador, the best service would be provided by sharing responsibility of the node for information exchange between the identified universities and government agencies. This will generate a greater scope of support and utilize each of their best qualities in order to promote and optimize the formation of a Marine Science Information Network (MARSIIN) within and outside their countries.

They recommend providing the universities mentioned above with a full version of ARIEL software for receipt and delivery of document requests (\$1,000.00 each) and that the government institutes be provided with scanners (\$500.00 each) and be instructed in the use of PROSPERO for conversion to PDF files.

Communication among all the institutions (listed in table above) within each country should be greatly improved by such a national network of information sharing. It is now critical that we continue our communication with all of the institutions by e-mail in order to promote these national networks of marine science libraries. We also note that it is now feasible to use videoconferences for closer communication and meetings. Both the Universidad Agraria La Molina in Peru and ESPOL in Ecuador have offered their videoconference facilities for this purpose.

We propose a videoconference for Fall of 2004, inviting the institutions visited in Peru and Ecuador, and also inviting representatives of ODINCARSA, EPCOR, UNESCO, IAMSLIC and IAMSLIC LATINO. The videoconference program will include a presentation of each of the participants and representatives; the moderators will explain the mechanics of serials and thesis networking within and outside their country.

We envision the possibility of an international meeting by videoconference with most of the Latin American marine science libraries in 2005 in which we can establish the procedures for "Resource Sharing." Based on the experience of Ecuador and Peru, this can be done with the assistance of large universities from Colombia, Costa Rica and Chile that have this equipment available.

ATTENDANCE AT THE 30th ANNUAL IAMSLIC CONFERENCE:

This year, four Latin Americans are attending and participating in the 30th Annual IAMSLIC Conference. We are participating as coordinators of the Latin American Group, with support from ODINCARSA/IOC/UNESCO, FAO, IAMSLIC and UNAM.

PROJECTION FOR NEXT YEAR:

The regional group will have been in existence for one year. Short- and medium-term goals can be defined, as well as the search for funding to establish an annual or biannual meeting to exchange ideas, experiences, and infrastructure development.

Projects of common interest are expected to continue and members will undertake new projects next year.

Annual Meeting. In 2005 we will try to have our first Regional Latin American Group meeting. We will submit proposals to obtain financial support for the meeting. We will coordinate with the working committee to organize this first meeting. Because of the long distances of this region and the big economic expense, the other alternative is to have a videoconference meeting.

Collaboration. We are committed to continue collaborating with ODINCARSA/IOC/UNESCO and EPCOR for mutual benefits with the Electronic Delivery Document Network (information and data exchange project) and with the implementation of a regional network of bibliographic electronic catalogues and other projects. We will continue promoting the cooperation and interaction of the group with IAMSLIC, as well as the related projects in the region such as ODINCARSA/IOC, UNESCO, EPCOR, etc.

We will keep in touch with the members to promote mutual cooperation and the transfer of knowledge and experience in information and libraries management. We will be the direct link of the group with IAMSLIC, to get fellowships and capacity building opportunities for members of the group. We will promote the group in order to get more members

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We recommend that the group continue to look for funds that can promote further growth and regional group meetings.

2. Develop a discussion group list for the Latin American Regional Group. Define topics and possible meeting dates in order to establish stronger contact with Latin American people.
3. We are inviting to Latin American members to contact us through messengers.
4. We are exploring the possibility of using institutions' videoconference equipment for training and meetings with the Latin American Regional Group. This technology will be very useful to provide stronger communication among members and to advance the goals of the group.
5. Use databases from the pilot project of ODINCARSA initially with the founding institutions, then later with others who want to join. This will be of mutual benefit to ODINCARSA, IAMSLIC and EPCOR.
6. We consider it very important that more Latin American members attend IAMSLIC's annual conference.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

We are very grateful to IAMSLIC, ODINCARSA/IOC, UNESCO and EPCOR for their support; and we hope they can continue helping us with the activities and growing of this Regional Latin American Group of IAMSLIC and as Marine Information Management Group.

Thanks to those IAMSLIC colleagues for their voluntary and invaluable help in the advance of this Group. Our special thanks to the working committee.

Also, a lot of thanks to the authorities and staff of the Institute of Marine Sciences and Limnology, U.N.A.M., for their facilities and for hosting the web server.

Special thanks are due to Federico, Natalia, German, Carlos, Pedro, Moni, Jorge, Marcela, Luis Guillermo and Roman at the Mazatlán Academic Unit for their support, patience and volunteer collaboration with the Coordinator of the Latin American Regional Group.

